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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 002045

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: ROCKETS STRIKE ISRAEL AS ISRAEL MAINTAINS GAZA
CROSSINGS CLOSURE

REF: JERUSALEM 2025

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Gaza militants fired at least 13 rockets into Israel on November 14, lightly injuring an Israeli in Sderot and damaging four buildings. An IAF airstrike injured two PIJ militants near Bayt Lahiya. The GOI has closed all of Gaza's crossings (most have been closed since November 4) and Gaza and UN contacts report critical shortages of electricity, fuels and cooking gas, potable water, and medicines. UNRWA has halted food distribution due to lack of supplies and has warned of a looming humanitarian disaster. End summary.

Barrage of Rockets; GOI
Airstrikes Injure 2 Militants

¶2. (C) Gaza contacts told PolOff that Hamas, PIJ, and PRC militants fired 10 rockets toward Sderot on November 14, eight of which landed in Israel. Local press report that one Israeli was injured in Sderot. Press report that five Grad-type rockets struck the Ashkelon area on November 15, causing no injuries and light property damage. Palestinian press report that IAF airstrikes near Bayt Lahiya injured two PIJ militants, and that IAF fire has targeted Hamas security buildings.

All Gaza Crossings Closed; Shortages of
Electricity, Fuel, Water, Medicine Acute

¶3. (SBU) UN contacts reported November 14 that all Gaza crossings remain closed, and UNRWA has canceled emergency and regular food distributions (reftel). (Note: UNRWA distributes food to 750,000 refugees in Gaza on a rotating schedule. End Note). Gaza commercial crossings have been closed since November 4 except for limited industrial diesel shipments through Nahal Oz fuel transfer station. Supplies of diesel, gasoline, and cooking gas are at minimal levels this week, according to Gaza fuel sector contacts. Erez crossing was also closed November 14, and UNRWA Commissioner General Karen AbuZayd reports she was prevented from returning to her home in Gaza. UNRWA, UN OCHA, and ICRC contacts report increased difficulty for staff crossing Erez, and increased delays for permits, with the IDF now questioning whether UN and international organization work in Gaza is sufficiently "humanitarian" to allow permit issuance.

¶4. (C) The Gaza power plant shut down on November 13 for the second time due to a lack of industrial fuel, according to the plant's chief engineer. UN OCHA Gaza contacts said 600,000 Gaza residents are experiencing blackouts of 18-20 hours/day since the shutdown. Over the past year, the plant produced around 65 megawatts (MW) of daily power, while 115 MW continue to be imported from Israel feeder lines and 17 MW

from the Egyptian grid. Gaza Fuel Sector Association Vice-Chairman Mahmud Khuzander told Econoff November 14 that 100,000-150,000 liters/day of diesel and 40,000-50,000 liters/day of gasoline had been shipped through Rafah-area tunnels over the last two months, using advanced pumping systems developed by smugglers, but, since November 9, there have been no gasoline shipments via the tunnels and limited diesel shipments due to &issues on the Egyptian side.8 (Note: UNSCO officers also assessed that there have not been significant fuel shipments since November 9 via tunnels. End note).

15. (SBU) ICRC reported to PolOff November 14 that there are critical shortages of medical supplies and drugs in Gaza. The last delivery was September 2, and supplies of 94 out of 473 essential drugs are depleted. UN contacts said Gaza hospitals are operating at limited capacity, due to power black-outs. Since the November 13 shutdown of the power plant, most hospitals in Gaza City have no electricity 2-6 hours/day and have limited fuel supplies for their generators.

16. (C) On November 14, UN OCHA briefed donors that there is little available fuel to operate water pumps. 20 percent of Gazans receive potable water only every other day and another 30 percent receive potable water only every third day. Gaza water sector contacts told EconOff November 14 that water and sewage pumps no longer have fuel and are running on electricity, limited to a few hours each day. These contacts said the combination of minimal electricity and fuel has resulted in raw sewage flowing into the Mediterranean Sea at an increased rate of 65,000 cubic meters/day. Numerous

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municipal pumps are inoperable for lack of spare parts.

Gaza Banks Short on Funds

17. (SBU) Commercial and merchant depositors have mostly stopped deposits, according to Bank of Palestine contacts in Gaza, due to private sector concerns that bank accounts are not liquid. Bank of Palestine branches in Gaza purchased USD 500,000 in shekels on the black market on November 12 to continue paying salaries and maintain operations, and, as of November 13, the bank had paid out 90 percent of November salary payments. Other banks have paid November salaries in full, partly in USD, and now report a complete lack of shekels.

WALLES